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# OUR WAR WITH GERMANY

## XI

(January 3—February 6)

This review of the tenth month of our war with Germany is written on the last day of that month—the next day after the first public announcement in our newspapers that American troops are at last holding a sector of the line on the west front in France. How long they had been holding it before the censor permitted the announcement is, of course, not public property. Nor does it matter. The main thing is that we are now on the line, and it is a promise of the fulfilment of our hope that before the end of the war the fighting strength of the United States shall make itself felt.

This begins to look like what the average man understands by “participation” in the war. Of course we have been actually participating for a long time, in fact for ten months. There are many different methods of participation, with various economic forces that may be more effectual in reducing Germany’s power of resistance than the fighting valor of the men we now have on the sector we hold in France. We have been helping to make it a real blockade, and to cut off the numerous and devious means by which Germany obtained supplies, no matter how small the quantity, of the different materials she needed in her war making. We have strengthened our allies with money and credit, and our naval forces have borne a gallant and distinguished part in the defense of the allied transport service against the submarines.

But now we have men “on the line.” There is an “American front” and the censor permits it to be known that our men are holding trenches in Lorraine. We may even particularize a little. We are almost on the German border. With a little fortunate effort we might become invaders of the enemy territory. Every day the news reports give details of the doings of our soldiers on this front, and bring inevitably the sad news of casualties—men killed and wounded, and occasionally captured. Nothing approaching the dignity or importance of a battle has occurred as yet on the American front, but our men are in the fighting, and the close of the tenth month finds us really “participating in the war against Germany.”

Three alliterative subjects were the chief recipients of public attention during this tenth month—participation, peace and preparation. Strong efforts for all three have run co-ordinately throughout the month, but at the close the hopes for peace were not as high as they had been at different points during this time. Certain distinguished efforts to pave the way for a possible discussion of peace

terms were made in this month. David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, delivered a remarkable speech, outlining the British war aims. He was followed in a few days by President Wilson, who, speaking to a joint session of Congress, laid down fourteen specific conditions of peace. In due course formal replies came from Count von Hertling, the German chancellor, and Count Czernin, the Austrian premier. Neither speech offered a hopeful basis for enduring peace, and the month closed with the publication of a formal statement by the Supreme War Council of the Entente Allies rejecting the peace feelers of the Teutonic allies, and announcing that the Council had "arrived at a complete unanimity of policy on measures for the prosecution of the war."

This announcement appeared in the same newspapers which carried that of American occupation of a part of the Lorraine front. So just as we were informed that we were actually getting into the fighting on land we were assured that the war was to go on indefinitely, and that the hopes of an early peace which had been inspired by the various statements of aims were not yet to be realized.

The peace parleys which had been going on at Brest-Litovsk between the Bolshevik Russians and the Ukrainians on one side and the Teutonic Allies on the other have continued at intervals since our last review. First one side, and then the other, has journeyed back to Petrograd or Berlin as the case might be, for consultation with superiors, and to make explanation or receive orders. It has been reported at different times that each side had broken off the negotiations. But if either side ever did, it has soon repaired the break, and when the original armistice expired it was renewed for one month more on Russian initiative.

Meantime the Russians have been encountering more and more difficulties and divisions at home, and the Teutonic Allies have been progressing in arrogance and rapacity, as was to have been expected. Having at first declared their acceptance of the Russian principles of "no annexations and no indemnities," the Germans were forced to meet a practical application of the formula in the case of the Russian territories now held in German occupation. Their answer was a flat refusal. They declined to evacuate these territories, as contemplated in the first and second items of the Russian terms of peace. They said that these territories "already had local authorities who had declared in favor of breaking away from Russia, and such decision should be regarded as valid." They did not regard it as necessary to remark that these local authorities had been installed by German military forces and now function under German control. Neither the Bolsheviks nor any one else was fooled by these tactics.

On January 10 the Teutonic negotiators solemnly announced the withdrawal of their offer to conclude a general peace without forcible annexations and indemnities on the ground that the Allies had not accepted it. Therefore the responsibility for continuing the war rests—from the German point of view—entirely on the Entente Powers.

At this writing the Teutonic negotiators are again in Berlin for conference and there is renewed suggestion of a rupture of the negotiations.

This month opened with Mr. Lloyd George's statement of British war aims. It was made on January 5, before the British Trade Union conference. The terms specified were closely similar to those of previous declarations. The British are not fighting, he said, to crush Germany, but it will be much more easy to negotiate peace with a liberalized Government. Belgium must be restored, politically, territorially and economically, with such reparation as can be made for the devastation of her towns and provinces. Serbia, Roumania, Montenegro and the others similarly to be restored. And the British will stand by France to the death for the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine.

The Lloyd George statement was accepted as satisfactory by British labor and by Britain's allies. Three days later, on January 8, President Wilson went before Congress and delivered the most carefully itemized and specific statement of peace conditions that has come from any of the belligerent statesmen. He voiced again his distrust of the German rulers and demanded to know for whom the negotiators at Brest-Litovsk spoke—the "spirit and intention of the liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation?" His programme of world peace contained fourteen paragraphs: 1, open diplomacy; 2, freedom of navigation, in peace and in war; 3, removal of international economic barriers; 4, reduction of national armaments; 5, absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, the interests of the population concerned having equal weight with Governmental claims; 6, evacuation of all Russian territory and such settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will give her unembarrassed opportunity for independent determination of her political development and national policy; 7, Belgium evacuated and restored; 8, Alsace-Lorraine restored to France; 9, Italian frontiers readjusted; 10, the peoples of Austria-Hungary accorded freest opportunity for autonomous development; 11, Roumania, Serbia and Montenegro evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia to have access to the sea and the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the Balkan States to be guaranteed internationally; 12, Turkey to be assured sovereignty of Turkish portions of Ottoman Empire, but other nationalities now under Turkish rule to have unmolested opportunity for autonomous development, Dardanelles to be free for all nations under international guarantee; 13, an independent Polish State; 14, an international league for peace.

The entire Allied world endorsed the President's statement of peace conditions. British labor especially approved. In Germany it aroused furious anger, and the newspapers, which are under Government control, published it in garbled or distorted form or not at all.

Count von Hertling and Count Czernin replied to the Wilson and Lloyd George speeches on the same day, January 24. The German Chancellor spoke before the Main Committee of the Reichstag, and the Austrian Premier before the Reichsrat. Count Hertling made his reply specific, taking up the President's terms paragraph by paragraph. To the first five he professed adherence, but explained as to number 2 that it would be highly important for England to give up Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Hong-Kong, the Falkland Islands and other "strongly

fortified naval bases on important international routes." He suggested that "practical realization" of number 5 "will encounter some difficulties." As to number 6—the evacuation of Russia—Count Hertling said that since the Entente had refused to join in the negotiations within the specified period of ten days he must "decline to allow any subsequent interference." The Belgian question, number 7 in Mr. Wilson's programme, Count Hertling said "belongs to those questions the details of which are to be settled by negotiation at the peace conference." As to Alsace-Lorraine he said: "I can only again expressly accentuate the fact that there can never be a question of dismemberment of imperial territory." Numbers 9, 10 and 11 Count Hertling left to Austria-Hungary, with the remark that where German interests were concerned "we shall defend them most energetically." Number 12, he said, concerned only "our loyal, brave ally, Turkey." He added that the integrity of Turkey and the safeguarding of her capital "are important and vital interests of the German Empire also," and Turkey could count on Germany's energetic support. The Polish question, Mr. Wilson's number 13, was for Poland, Germany and Austria to decide. "We are on the road to this goal," said Hertling. As to the league of nations, "if it proves on closer examination to be conceived in a spirit of complete justice and impartiality toward all," Germany was ready, when all the other questions have been settled, to "begin the examination of the basis of such a band of nations."

Count Czernin also made a detailed reply to Mr. Wilson, considering the President's terms paragraph by paragraph. In general the Austrian Premier was far more ready to talk peace on the Wilson basis—or sought to convey that impression. "Our views are identical" he said, "not only on the broad principles regarding a new organization of the world after the war, but also on several concrete questions, and differences which still exist do not seem to me to be so great that a conversation regarding them would not lead to enlightenment and a rapprochement." Count Czernin added that this situation tempted him to ask "if an exchange of ideas between the two Powers could not be the point of departure for a personal conversation among all States which have not yet joined in peace negotiations."

But while all this looked on the surface very much as if Austria would really like to begin effective peace conversations, there was a reference to Austria's determination to stand by her allies, especially Germany, which destroyed the value of Count Czernin's otherwise ostensibly peaceful discourse. He said that Austria-Hungary, "faithful to her engagement to fight to the end in defence of her allies, will defend the possessions of her war allies as she would her own."

Which brings the peace question back to the same old proposition of beating Germany.

There was one sentence in Count Hertling's speech which disclosed the interesting fact that the attitude of the world with respect to Germany has at last penetrated German intelligence. He said that the conception of Germany's enemies "finds expression as if we were the guilty who must do penance and promise improvement." And he added: "The leaders of the Entente must first renounce this standpoint and this deception."

In those two paragraphs the reason is fully set forth for the unanimous decision of the Entente Supreme War Council that the war must go on. As long as Germany is correctly interpreted by that speech of Hertling's and as long as Austria will support Germany as Czernin asserted, there is nothing to do but bring up the guns, and that is just what American preparation aims at.

Meantime there have been continued reports from both Austria and Germany of domestic upheavals which may or may not portend an early collapse of their present iron control. For more than a fortnight the news reports have dealt with labor demonstrations and strikes in Vienna, Berlin and other important cities and towns of both Germany and Austria. The workmen were represented as demanding "peace and bread." The reports from Vienna were coupled with news of the fall of the Cabinet. In Germany, where government control of the press is supreme, the conflict of reports was such as to confuse the situation. No accurate line on the extent of the upheaval was obtainable. The military forces were relied upon to put down the strikes, and there were threats of shooting strikers. There were also reports that strikers were warned to go back to work or take their chances with the army. At all events German iron discipline seems to have regained the mastery, if, indeed, it ever was really threatened.

There have been two domestic battles of absorbing interest during the month, both connected with our preparation for a larger measure of participation in the fighting on land later. One was a fight with the forces of nature as well as of organization and inefficiency in the effort to end the transportation congestion, and by moving both coal and freight get the industry and transportation of the country once more on something like a going basis. The other was a fight that developed in the Senate and was aimed against the deadening effects of red tape in the military organization. At this writing both fights seem to have produced good results.

The coal and transportation situations have demanded and received unremitting attention and effort. The Fuel Administrator and Director-General of railroads have had to fight not only the constant production of more freight and coal than could be transported by the railroads under existing conditions, but also an unbroken series of snow and other storms and of severe cold weather, the like of which is hardly within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

Early in the month Secretary McAdoo, the Director-General of railroads, had an important conference with the heads of the railroad brotherhoods and, as the newspaper reports put it, "requested" them to work overtime in order to help meet the shortage of labor. The brotherhood leaders expressed a willingness to work with Mr. McAdoo to maintain transportation efficiency. Mr. McAdoo thereupon announced his intention to appoint a Wage Adjustment Commission to take up the question of increased pay which the brotherhood men were pressing. Later Mr. McAdoo named Secretary Lane as head of this commission, with Interstate Commerce Commissioner McChord as another member together with Chief Justice J. Harry Covington of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia and William R. Willcox, former member of the Public Service Commission of New York.

On January 6 Mr. McAdoo issued orders doubling the demurrage on railroad cars in order to force consignees to unload them more promptly. On the 14th he ordered that coal for domestic use and for vital public utilities should have first preference in shipment, with food stuffs and coal for bunkering ships to our allies next in order.

On January 16 the Fuel Administrator ordered coal sellers to give preference in this order: 1, railroads; 2, domestic users, hospitals, etc.; 3, public utilities; 4, bunkers; 5, municipal, county and State governments and public uses; 6, manufacturers of perishable foods.

At the same time the Fuel Administrator ordered a total shutdown for five days from January 18 to 22, both inclusive, and for each Monday for ten weeks. This order applied east of the Mississippi and in Minnesota and Louisiana. Dr. Garfield declared that it was necessary in order to prevent a crisis and widespread suffering.

There was an immediate and angry protest from all parts of the country affected by the order. Industries everywhere declared that it was an uneconomic measure and would have disastrous effects, entailing great loss upon industry and hardship upon working men whom it would deprive of wages aggregating millions of dollars. Dr. Garfield insisted on enforcing his order however, and was supported by President Wilson. The Senate adopted a resolution requesting the Fuel Administration to postpone the order, but it went into effect just a quarter of an hour before the Senate Resolution reached Dr. Garfield.

The vigorous efforts to relieve the coal famine in New York and the New England States were making some headway, despite the severity of the weather, and this closing order gave further assistance until there was talk of rescinding the order for further Monday closing. When the order was issued more than a hundred steamships were held in port for lack of bunker coal. In the first two weeks more than 75 of these ships received the necessary supplies, and this greatly improved the ocean transportation situation. The fact appears to have been that the industrial production of the country was greater than the available ships could transport, especially when they were delayed by lack of bunker coal.

On January 4 President Wilson went before Congress and delivered a message urging legislation to complete and support the Federal control of railroads undertaken as a war measure. He asked a specific guarantee to the roads that their properties would be maintained throughout the period of Federal control in as good repair and as complete equipment as at present; and that the roads should receive equitable compensation. He recommended as the compensation basis the average income of the three years ending June 30, 1917.

The Administration bill conforming to the President's speech was introduced in both Senate and House, and immediately encountered opposition because no limit was set for the period of Federal control. Both senators and representatives believed that the law should provide some date for the termination of Federal control, one year, or two years after the war. Mr. McAdoo contended vigorously against such a limitation and President Wilson supported him. But both Senate and House committees voted for a time limit. The bill appropriates \$500,000,000 to form a revolving fund to cover expenses of control,

equipment, betterments, etc. The Administration is urging action on the bill, as a means of facilitating the flotation of the next Liberty Loan, which is scheduled to come before spring. Mr. McAdoo told a committee of Congress before which he was urging action on the railroad bill that it would be necessary to raise about ten billions before the end of the fiscal year. But not all that will be by loan.

The criticism of the War Department was accompanied by much more acrimony than developed from the fight over the railroad legislation. This situation culminated in an attack by President Wilson upon Senator Chamberlain, of Oregon, chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. Mr. Chamberlain spoke on January 19 at a luncheon given him in New York by the National Security League. In the course of his extemporaneous address he said that the War Department had "fallen down," that it had "almost ceased to function" and that there was inefficiency in every department of the government. Next day President Wilson wrote asking him if he had been correctly quoted. Upon receiving the Senator's reply to the effect that he had been quoted with substantial accuracy, the President issued a statement accusing the Senator of an "astonishing and absolutely unjustifiable distortion of the truth," and adding that the Chamberlain statement "sprang out of opposition to the Administration's whole policy, rather than out of any serious intention to reform its practice." The President referred to Secretary Baker as "one of the ablest public officials I have ever known."

This denunciation of Senator Chamberlain was surprising in view of the Oregon senator's strong support of numerous Administration measures. It was Senator Chamberlain who handled the food control bills which were not supported by Senator Gore, the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture. Mr. Chamberlain replied in a three-hour speech in the Senate on January 24, in which he rehearsed some of the evidence that had been given before his committee in the hearings on War Department conduct which it had been conducting for some time. It was at these hearings that the inefficiency in the Ordnance and Quartermaster's bureaus, and in other War Department bureaus was brought out.

These hearings had resulted in the preparation by the Senate Committee of two bills, one providing for the creation of a war cabinet of three, and the other for the appointment of a director of munitions. Both bills were strongly opposed by the Administration and Secretary Baker. Mr. Baker had appeared before the committee in these hearings, and had defended his department, but in a way which lent color to the belief that he was not sufficiently impressed with the size and importance of the task before his department. His appearance had rather increased the demand in the committee for the legislation.

Senator Chamberlain's speech in reply to the President made a profound impression. He declared that the President did not know the truth as it had been presented to his committee, and he gave official figures to show the shortages of clothing, and the deaths in the training camps in which Surgeon General Gorgas had testified there were unsanitary conditions and lack of proper clothing.

Secretary Baker promptly requested another opportunity to appear



before the committee and present additional information. He did appear on January 28, and produced a statement which made a much better effect in its showing of the accomplishments of the War Department. He did not contend that mistakes had not been made, but that when discovered they had been corrected and were not repeated. Also he declared that an immense amount of work had been accomplished, and that no army of such size had ever been raised and equipped so quickly before. He said we should have half a million men in France by spring and a million more ready to go. Afterward Senator Chamberlain lunched with Mr. Baker, and there were indications that an agreement might be reached as to the director of munitions bill. But Administration opposition to the war cabinet measure was unremitting. Mr. Baker did appoint a "surveyor general of purchases" and gave the place to Mr. Stettinius, who had been the chief purchasing agent for the Allies before we entered the war. But it was pointed out that the new surveyor of purchases was without the real authority which alone could give him solid ground for success.

By way of pleasing contrast the House committee which investigated the navy reported in terms of the highest praise of its work, commending its efficiency and achievements. Notwithstanding the tremendously increased demands upon it, said the report, it was working smoothly and harmoniously and with great efficiency.

Provost Marshal General Crowder announced that more than a million men in class 1 of the draft registrants had been accepted for service, and that the yearly class of young men reaching the age of 21, who will be made liable for military duty under pending legislation, will number more than 700,000. General Crowder estimates that nearly all these men will be available for military service, and that they will be sufficient to meet all demands upon us for troops. So the tenth month marked substantial gain in accomplishment and real improvement in prospects.

*(This record is as of February 6 and is to be continued)*